



Folsom Lake State Recreation Area General Plan/Resource Management Plan Update

Public Meeting Community Workshop #1 November 20, 2002, 7:00-9:30pm

Summary Notes

These notes summarize the public comment and input received at the first community workshop on the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area General Plan/Resource Management Plan Update. These notes also reflect input from the comment sheets submitted thus far. Input received at public workshops throughout the planning process, and from submitted comment sheets, will be used by the planning team to determine key planning issues and opportunities to be addressed in the plan.

Definition of Planning Area

Some in attendance commented on the definition of the project planning area, which includes Folsom Lake, Lake Natoma, and the Folsom Powerhouse State Historic Park. One participant wondered why the Auburn State Recreation Area (SRA) is not included in the planning area. It was explained that the Auburn SRA is a separate park unit that will be undergoing its own general planning process beginning in 2003. However, connectivity between Folsom Lake and Auburn SRAs is an issue that will be addressed in the Folsom Lake planning process.

A few participants suggested a separate planning process for Folsom Lake and Lake Natoma. These participants felt that the character of Lake Natoma differs significantly from that of Folsom Lake and that these differences should be maintained and enhanced. There was some concern that a single general plan would be unable to sufficiently protect the character of Lake Natoma. It was explained that Lake Natoma is part of the Folsom Lake SRA and that the general plan must by law include the entire area of the park unit. It was also explained that the planning process will address the different character of the two lakes and ensure that they remain distinct.

Lake Natoma

A few participants voiced concerns with the condition and maintenance of the Lake Natoma area, including:

- The occurrence of littering due to a lack of trash disposal facilities;
- Broken beer and liquor bottles resulting from inappropriate activities; and
- Balloons floating into the area from nearby automall that could harm wildlife.

It was suggested that solutions to these problems could include partnerships with private sponsors for maintenance and continued participation in the coastal cleanup day program. One participant remarked that since most Lake Natoma users enter the park free of charge that perhaps there is not enough "value" being placed on the facilities by users.

Aquatic Recreation

Several points related to aquatic recreation were raised, including:

- The importance of maintaining Lake Natoma as a rowing facility of international calibre;
- The need for an additional put in for rowers on Lake Natoma to reduce congestion;
- The proposal by the Yacht Club for a multi-use building facility on Folsom Lake which could mean additional revenue for the State; and
- The continued interest in an artificial whitewater slalom course south of Nimbus Dam proposed as part of the Bay Area Olympic bid.

Recreation vs. Environment

A key point raised is the importance of balancing recreation uses with the capacity of the natural environment. It was explained that a carrying capacity analysis would be completed as part of the planning process to balance recreation uses and their intensity with the ability of the natural environment to accommodate them. One participant raised the issue of water quality on Folsom Lake and how boating here affects drinking water quality for end users.

Maintenance of Park Facilities

The point was raised that some facilities appear to be in poor condition, with the Folsom Powerhouse being cited as one example. One participant asked whether a maintenance program for facilities would be part of the general plan, who would do the work, and how would it be paid for. It was explained that facility maintenance will be addressed in the planning process.

Fire Management

Fire management along the boundaries of the park unit is a major concern with surrounding residents and was raised by several participants. A Lakehills Estates resident suggested that neighbors in the area would be willing to volunteer to assist in addressing this concern and to improving the park in general. It was explained that a fire management plan for the park unit is currently being prepared and that the results of that plan would be folded into the planning process.

Cultural Resources and Interpretation

A few participants noted the importance of the history of the area. There is a rich pre-flood native and gold rush history here and significant opportunities for public interpretation. One participant reminded the planning team and the audience of the importance of protecting important historic and cultural artifacts within the park unit. Another suggested that the lack of natural and cultural resource interpretation along existing trail facilities in the park unit is a significant oversight.

Trails

It is no surprise that trail-related issues garnered the most discussion at this first public workshop. Key issues raised include trail system expansion, education, and enforcement.

- *Expansion.* Many trail users in attendance noted the importance of additional trail miles as necessary to address issues related to both user capacity and safety. Additional trail miles could be provided as new or extended single-track facilities or by twinning existing single-track facilities. New or extended single-track facilities are seen as the best way to open up new territory for trail users. The twinning of existing single-track facilities is seen as the best way to reduce conflicts between multiple trail users and to improve safety, particularly between equestrians and mountain bikers. Related points raised include:

- Half the lake is off-limits to mountain bikes;
 - Parallel trails the only way to separate conflicting uses;
 - What about assigning odd/even trail use days to accommodate multi-use?
 - Coordinate trail planning with neighboring community and agency plans;
 - Create new trail facilities where possible...don't take away mileage from one user to give to another;
 - Improve the Western Express Trail to Auburn but maintain its historic feel (don't pave); and
 - New trails should be dirt to accommodate equestrian users.
- *Education.* Participants repeatedly stated the importance of education in improving the safety of multiple-use trails. Several equestrian participants recounted bad experiences with mountain bikers riding illegally on the trail, horses being spooked, and riders taking serious spills. Several mountain bikers noted how little of the trail system in the park unit permits their use and by how outlawing mountain bikers will result in outlaw mountain bikers. Related points raised include:
 - Safety should be the focus on the trail system;
 - Trail user education is key to ensure cooperation and respect;
 - Need signage program to educate users on trail etiquette
 - There is a willingness between equestrians and mountain bikers to get along; and
 - Cooperation and respect will help keep trails safe for all users.
 - *Enforcement.* This was seen as a major shortcoming of the existing trail system. The existing users see illegal trail use daily but feel helpless in doing anything about it. In conjunction with education, enforcement is seen by most users as the best means of improving trail system safety. Related points raised include:
 - Establish uniform rules for the trail system and enforce them with fines;
 - Set up park hotline for trail users to report maintenance issues, conflicts, emergencies, etc.;
 - Additional funding needed to support trail enforcement;
 - What about using volunteers for trail enforcement?

Remember that your participation in the General Plan Update process will be important to the creation of a successful, well-considered plan. We look forward to your attendance at the next Community Workshop, tentatively scheduled for March 2003.

Questions or Comments?

Contact Jim Micheaels, State Parks Gold Fields District, at (916) 988-9116 ext. 202, or e-mail the consultant team at folsomlakeplanupdate@sf.wrtdesign.com.

You can also visit the State Parks Website for the latest information on the General Plan Update at http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=22322